

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 and 31 are pending in this application, with Claims 1 and 31 being independent. Claims 16-30 have been cancelled without disclaimer of or prejudice to the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1-7, 9, 10, and 13 have been amended. Applicants submit that the amendments to Claims 2-7, 9, 10, and 13 merely improve the form of the claims and do not limit their scope. Claim 31 is newly-presented. No new matter has been added.

Applicants submit that the present application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration and an early allowance are respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A remote maintenance system for maintaining [an] industrial equipment installed at a remote location, the system comprising:

monitor means for monitoring [an operating state of one or a plurality of] the industrial equipment [equipments]; and

management means for managing maintenance of the industrial equipment [while communicating information associated with maintenance of the industrial equipment with said monitor means] through the Internet [internet],

wherein said management means communicates with said monitor means through the Internet.

2. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein said management means performs centralized maintenance management of respective industrial equipment [equipments] installed in each of a plurality of factories.

3. (Amended) The system according to claim 2, wherein the [said] plurality of factories are factories of at least one user, and said management means is arranged on a vendor side, the vendor side different from a side at which the industrial equipment is installed.

4. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of types of industrial equipment [equipments] are installed in one factory, and said management means comprises a plurality of management means respectively corresponding to the types of industrial equipment [equipments].

5. (Amended) The system according to claim 4, wherein said plurality of industrial equipment [equipments] are supplied by different vendors, and said management means are arranged in the different vendors.

6. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising means for supplying software for [of] the industrial equipment or guide information associated with an operation of the industrial equipment from said management means to the industrial equipment through the Internet [internet].

7. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein said monitor means detects an occurrence of a trouble state of the industrial equipment and notifies said management means of status information [for] specifying [a state of] the trouble state, and said management means determines a countermeasure against the trouble state [of the industrial equipment] on the basis of the status information and informs said monitor means of response information based on the determined countermeasure.

9. (Amended) The system according to claim 7, wherein said management means has a database for registering [the] information associated with maintenance of the industrial equipment, said database registering information for identifying a particular [an] industrial equipment, a trouble state [of a trouble to occur], and a countermeasure against the trouble state, the countermeasure and the trouble state corresponding to [in correspondence with] each other, and said management means looks up said database to determine a countermeasure against a corresponding trouble state.

10. (Amended) The system according to claim 9, wherein said management means comprises automatic updating means for updating said database on the basis of contents of the information associated with maintenance of the industrial equipment every time [exchanging] the information associated with maintenance of the industrial equipment is exchanged with said monitor means.

13. (Amended) The system according to claim 12, wherein said management means further comprises communication security means for inhibiting a third party, other than [except] the user of the industrial equipment, from accessing said database.